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Jesus in the Last Garden

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Jesus in the Last Garden

Day 21

Jesus came with them to a place called Gethsemane...and He began to be sorrowful and deeply distressed. Then He said to them, "My soul is exceedingly sorrowful, even to death, stay here and watch with Me." He went a little farther and fell on His face, and prayed, saying, "O My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as You will." (Matthew 26:36-39)

In the *Garden of Gethsemane*, Jesus fought the greatest war of eternity. The souls of every man, woman, and child who had ever lived and who would ever live were at stake. Jesus battled for us all that night. His agony of soul was for you and for me.

God created humankind to live in relationship with Him and to reign over the earth in keeping with His lovingkindness. God intended that we express His *will* on earth. He intended that the soul (the mind, *will*, and emotions) of humanity be under His guidance because that is what is best for us.

But, in the *Garden of Eden*, Adam fell for Satan's temptation and chose his own *will* over God's. He cut himself off from relationship—from life in God's goodness. After the fall, humans, with their "opened" eyes and new-found knowledge of good and evil, had to make their own decisions. Now the independent soul, separated from God, reigned over earth.

The Father sent His Son as a man to accomplish in the last garden (Gethsemane) what Adam had fallen from in the first (Eden). He came to win back our place in union with God.

In this passage, we see the intensity of the battle that raged in the last garden. Jesus asked for the cup to pass ... but nevertheless willed His suffering *soul* to hold fast to God's *will*. "My soul is exceedingly sorrowful, even to death.... O My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; nevertheless, *not as I will, but as You will.*"

We cannot grasp the anguish. As he battled in the garden, Jesus sweat drops of blood knowing what lay before Him.

Scripture records the horrid physical events that followed in vivid detail. Jesus was betrayed, falsely accused, whipped, spat upon and cursed. He stumbled along a path lined with mockers to a hill called Golgotha. A crown of thorns was pressed upon His head. Onlookers despised the “King of the Jews” nailed to the cross for their sins.

Yet the internal horror is hidden from view. The suffering of the “cup” was far greater than we can comprehend. It was as if Jesus’ heart was being torn in two. Throughout His life, He had always done His Father’s will ... and known He was pleasing to His Father. But now, doing God’s will meant not unity, but separation; it meant experiencing the Father’s judgment and wrath.

When Jesus surrendered His will and took the sin of the human race upon Himself, the relationship He knew with His Father was severed. In agony of soul He cried out from the cross, “My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?” (Matthew 27:46). Our Savior bore the punishment of separation and wrath our sin deserved.

In the last garden, Jesus chose His Father’s will over His own. Our restored relationship with God—our acceptance and embrace—came through Jesus’ loss of these very things. Jesus took the wrath we deserved for our sin and gave us instead His life in union with God. In this way, Jesus became the perfect expression—the unbroken channel—for God’s love on earth.

Dearly beloved, let your soul rest in Jesus’ sacrifice. He chose to lay down His life, becoming in His death the greatest expression of love the world will ever know. He bore the penalty for your sin; He took the separation you deserved. Jesus reconciles you, as you really are, to the Father, as He really is. This is the vastness of His love for you.

Ponder for a Moment

Consider Jesus’ struggle to surrender His will to the will of His Father. What does this mean to you personally?